

**RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2010 MEETING**

Board Members Present: Thomas Deller, Chair; Kevin Flynn; Steve Durkee; Steve Devine; John Flaherty; Christopher Long; and Steve Farrell.

Absent: William Kennedy, Everett Stuart, and Edward Field.

Also Present: Alfred Moscola; Amy Pettine; Anne Galbraith; and Ellen Mandly and members of the public whose names are on the meeting sign-in sheet.

Mr. Deller called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m. and asked if the members had an opportunity to review the minutes of the January 7 and 22, 2010 and February 4, 2010 meetings. The members indicated they had and Steve Farrell made a motion that the three sets of minutes be approved as presented. Steve Devine seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously passed.

Ms. Pettine and Ms. Galbraith addressed the committee to give an update and overview of the RIPTA handbook. At recent meetings the committee went over RIPTA's planning processes and there was a request that staff compile all that material into a handbook for use by the Board of Directors and other stakeholders. Ms. Galbraith stated

that the existing RIPTA Board manual contains much of the desired information and suggested that additional be added to the Board manual, rather than create a new handbook.

Mr. Deller asked the committee to take a moment to review the manual and after a brief review staff answered questions and made note of comments relative to park and rides, turnarounds, the addition of train and rail information, the addition of information on the driver pick process and adding a section for the new management committee.

Mr. Moscola suggested that a section on security be added and that it include all memorandums of understanding with local police, TSA and homeland security and that there be a process for updating the book going forward. Mr. Deller suggested the final handbook be made available in paper and disc format.

Moving on to the RIPTA Strategic Plan Mr. Deller said a rough outline had been put together for discussion today and Ms. Galbraith began with the RIPTA timeline which documents the growth and evolution of RIPTA over the last four decades. She discussed important developments from RIPTA's beginning in the 1960's to today. She said the 2000's saw a tremendous growth in ridership and demand for service resulting in a flurry of interest leading many to advocate for additional funding in response to the growing demands for service. Many recent audits have concluded that RIPTA is performing quite

well and have recommended identifying additional funding.

Ms. Galbraith said the question is how RIPTA should grow in the future and she referenced the proposed strategic plan outline and discussed the 6 sections of that document in detail. The first 3 sections were standard but the last three require discussion to identify our needs, come up with strategies to address those needs and the level of effort and timeframe needed to develop the plan and devise an implementation plan and a funding strategy.

Ms. Galbraith and Ms. Pettine briefly discussed the challenges associated with the funding strategy and answered general questions on the proposed strategic plan. Mr. Devine noted an overlap with the Metro Study. Mr. Flynn suggested different scenarios to consider when deciding how to we proceed i.e., should we come up with a definitive strategy, or identify a range of possible strategies.

Mr. Deller said many state organizations have plans and RIPTA should help support other state objectives and build upon their transit aspect to help create economic growth. He discussed responding with different levels of service, but stressed the need to be clear on the costs associated with the different levels. Mr. Durkee agreed saying the RIPTA Board needs a strategy to deal with its current issues, but we should also develop premiere service as a future goal and be inspiring with that vision. Mr. Flynn agreed saying a treading water plan option will not inspire.

Following this conversation there was a brief discussion on the upcoming RIPTA budget workshop and a possible special Board meeting to take place beforehand due to the House Finance hearing.

Mr. Deller suggesting inviting members of the legislature to educate them on RIPTA's plans and funding issues. Mr. Devine agreed saying he is on multiple regional committees and ours is the only state that does not have legislators involved in the process. Mr. Farrell cited the separation of powers as the reason for the disconnect. A discussion ensued on how to involve and educate the legislators and following this Mr. Deller said this would be a good topic for discussion at the special board meeting.

Ms. Galbraith said time is of the essence and collectively we should piece together a draft strategic plan and vision statement and make it public to take advantage of the momentum set by the other stakeholders. She said a draft vision statement would be presented for consideration at the next meeting.

Ms. Pettine summed up the comments received: broadening the vision beyond RIPTA to include commuter rail; consider several scenarios from steady state to growth; and building on outside plans such as Metro Study and Transit 20/20;

Mr. Devine commented that a good commuter rail system in areas

such as Westerly and South County would eliminate some need for bus service and would allow RIPTA to concentrate on its core service in the metropolitan area. Mr. Flynn commented that Rhode Island is the most sensitive to having gas prices out of sync with neighboring states and would benefit most from a regional gas compact.

The discussion moved on to developing a long term funding strategy and Ms. Pettine discussed her document working towards a long term funding strategy for RIPTA and added that short term funding is also a critical issue. Mr. Deller explained in some detail the issues faced by the RIPTA Board regarding the use of use of ARRA funds for operating expenses and to fill the deficit, which provoked a brief discussion.

Next Ms. Pettine elaborated on RIPTA's operating budget, capital budget, and RIPTA's current unsustainable funding plan. She elaborated on the tables illustrating the local match for the capital budget and the yield per penny of the gas tax, which is declining. She discussed the \$292 million in federal funding for RIPTA via the TIP and said projects require a local match and said the more volatile local funding sources are the less opportunity there is to take advantage of federal dollars.

She discussed the chart on the last page which outlined recent and potential future actions to increase revenues and the attempts to control costs. She discussed each of the percentage breakdowns for

issues such as state/local funding sources, passenger revenues and miscellaneous and special revenues and federal reimbursements. She said there are questions as to how involved RIPTA should become in advocating these issues externally. Internally there are questions regarding passenger revenues and potential future actions, such as premium service, fare based zones and the elimination of senior/disabled discounts and how to come up with definitive answers to these suggestions.

She elaborated on current proposed legislation to eliminate senior/disabled passes and the potential impact to ADA service. Ms. Pettine answered questions regarding pass programs and unfunded mandates.

Mr. Flaherty then provided an update on the CTC's legislative initiatives, which are three separate bills which are 1) VMT Study Commission 2) nonbinding resolution memorializing congress to support pending federal legislation and 3) the trust fund bill. Mr. Flaherty explained each of the bills in detail, answered questions and said he had copies of the bills available.

At this point Mr. Durkee left the meeting and Mr. Deller asked for public comment. No public comments were made.

There being no further business Mr. Deller adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Recording Secretary